

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is requested. Claims 1-9 will be active in the application subsequent to entry of this Amendment.

Claims 1, 2 and 4 have been amended in order to more particularly point out and distinctly claim that which applicants regard as their invention and to more precisely state the acoustic apparatus to which the claims are directed. New claim 9 is directed to a preferred aspect of the invention and further defines the control device as being one of the possibilities contemplated by the last paragraph of claim 1.

Of the originally filed claims, claim 6 has been indicated to be allowable if incorporated into the claim from which it depends while claims 1-5, 7 and 8 have been rejected as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,661,811 to Huemann et al.

Applicants respectfully submit that their claims are not anticipated by the disclosures of this citation and, indeed, that their claims are patentable over the content of this document.

The present invention is directed to the problem of the balance control function in that the volume level of the rear speakers increases to the desired main volume level when the volume levels of the audio signals output from the front speakers are attenuated. That is, when the external audio signal is supplied to the front speakers and the volume levels of the rear speakers increase, the sound image moves to the rear direction and the user may fail to correctly hear and understand the external audio signal from the external device.

In contrast to the present invention, Huemann supplies an audio signal from the external device to the head-phone speaker, and it is different arrangement from the configuration of the present invention in which the audio signal from the external device is supplied to the speakers which output the audio signal. From this difference, it is clear that Huemann fails to disclose attenuating the main volume level, controlled by the volume control device, to prevent the sound image from moving to the rear direction.

While Huemann discloses that the volume level of the rear speakers are set to zero when the audio signal from the external device is supplied to the head-phone, the objective is to reduce the noise when listening to the audio signal when using the head-phone. In other words, the reduction of the rear speaker level in Huemann is clearly different from the attenuation of the main volume level according to the present invention.

In overview, in comparison with the present invention, Huemann fails to teach or suggest:

(1) supplying the audio signal from the external device to the speakers which output the audio signal, and

(2) attenuating the main volume level, when the audio signal from the external device is supplied to the speaker which has not been attenuated and the volume level of the speaker (to which the external audio signal is supplied) is attenuated.

Therefore, all claims are patentably distinguished over the Huemann reference.

Reconsideration and favorable action are solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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